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USA

Republican Attacks on Abortion Help Biden Campaign, But Will that be Enough Given Reaction to His Position on Israel?

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The American presidential election may depend on two social issues and movements. The Republicans' continued attacks on women's right to abortions, most recently in Arizona, will drive more voters to support incumbent Joe Biden in the coming presidential election. Though Biden's continued support for Israel's war on Palestinians may keep some away from the polls.

The Supreme Court of Arizona, made up of seven Republican appointees, ruled on April 9 that the state's 1864 law banning all abortions except those carried out to save the life of the mother was once again state law. The law was passed before Arizona became a state and before women won the right to vote there, both of which occurred in 1912. The 1864 law, which has no provisions for abortion in cases of rape or incest, had been in abeyance until the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision providing federal protection for abortion was overturned in June of 2022.

Arizona is a crucial swing state. Biden only won Arizona by about 10,000 votes over Trump, a 0.3% margin, the first time a Democratic presidential nominee carried Arizona since Bill Clinton in 1996, and only the second time since Harry S. Truman's 1948 victory. Consequently, the Arizona Supreme Court's decision horrified Republican politicians and, despite its reactionary implications, thrilled Democrats, as both parties recognize it will help Biden and the Democrats in the upcoming presidential election. As Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris are saying in their TV ads, "Trump did this."

The Arizona decision follows a ruling earlier this month by Florida's Supreme Court that upheld a ban on abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, a law that had been passed by the Republican legislature and signed by Republican Governor Ron DeSantis. Since most women don't even know they are pregnant at six weeks, it is effectively a total ban on abortions. And in Georgia, the Supreme Court of that state virtually outlawed invitro fertilization, making it more difficult for women who wanted to become pregnant through IVF to do so. All of this makes it absolutely clear that the Republicans are a danger to women's rights.

The Republican politicians attack on women's reproductive rights, driven by the party's white Evangelical Christian base, has led to a strong political reaction by Democrats, independent voters, and even some Republicans. In the last three years in seven politically diverse states—Kansas, Vermont, Montana, Michigan, Kentucky, California, and Ohio—voters have either voted to enshrine abortion rights in state law or have rejected attempts to penalize it. And in the 2023 elections, Democrats won gubernatorial or legislative elections where they were seen as the defenders of women's abortion rights. The attack on abortion most analysts believe will drive more women, young people, and suburban voters to the polls to vote for Biden and the Democrats in November.

At the same time, however, Biden's continued support for Israel in its genocidal war on Palestinians—at least 32,000 dead, including 13,800 children—may cost him the state of Michigan, another crucial swing state. Trump was victorious in Michigan in 2016. Biden won Michigan in 2020 by 154,000 votes. But the state has some 300,000 Muslim or Arab voters. It now appears likely that Biden has lost the support of tens of thousands of Arab and Muslim voters in Michigan, as well as other Arab, young, and Black voters who may either sit out the election or vote for a third party. The contradiction between the Democrat's progressive abortion policy and its reactionary imperialist foreign policy may lead to Biden's defeat.

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